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Message Text

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61
ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-20 NSC-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-11

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1666

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CGEN UR
SUBJ: US-SOVIET TOURIST TRAVEL

REF: STATE 162995

1. MORNING OF AUGUST 8 EMBOFFS CALLED ON IVAN P. ZABORIN, GENERAL MANAGER OF WESTERN HEMISPHERE DIVISION-INTOURIST WHO RECEIVED FOR S.S. NIKITIN. EMBOFFS RAISED POINTS IN REFTEL, MENTIONING TWO-WEEK VISA SUBMISSION REQUIREMENT AND STRESSING THAT US FAVORS INCREASED TOURISM IN BOTH DIRECTIONS.

2. EMBOFFS CITED WIDE DISPARITY IN NUMBERS OF SOVIETS VISITING US THAT COULD POSSIBLY BE CLASSIFIED AS TOURISTS AND NUMBER OF AMERICAN TOURISTS WHO VISIT THE USSR ANNUALLY. BY INTOURIST FIGURES, WHICH MAY BE INFLATED, 90,000 AMERICAN TOURISTS VISITED USSR IN 1973, VERSUS 7700 SOVIET VISITORS TO US. AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, SOVIETS WHO TRAVEL TO US ARE DIPLOMATS, OFFICIALS, MEMBERS OF DELEGATIONS, EXCHANGE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS, MEMBERS OF ATHLETIC TEAMS AND PERFORMING GROUPS, ETC. VERY FEW ARE "TOURISTS" IN AMERICAN SENSE OF THE WORD. WE WOULD CONSIDER AS REAL TOURISTS THE 1059 WHO RECEIVED VISAS IN 1973 AS SO-CALLED "PRIVATE VISITORS," I.E., PERSONS WHO RECEIVED EXIT VISAS TO TRAVEL TO THE U.S. INDIVIDUALLY AND UNOFFICIALLY TO VISIT RELATIVES.
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ADDITIONALLY, ABOUT 350 SOVIETS RECEIVED B-2 TOURIST

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VISAS AT REQUEST OF MFA AS MEMBERS OF INTOURIST-ORGANIZED
TOURIST GROUPS TO US; THOSE PERSONS, HOWEVER, ARE
OFFICIALLY SELECTED AND ARE NOT TOURISTS IN THE AMERICAN
SENSE; I.E. THEY ARE NOT INDIVIDUALS WHO SIGNED UP ON
THEIR OWN INITIATIVE.

3. EMBOFFS ASKED ZAVORIN IF HE HAD ANY IDEAS FOR INCREASING
SOVIET TOURISM TO U.S. GIVING POTENTIALLY SENSITIVE
SUBJECT OF SOVIET EXIT VISAS AND CURRENCY CONTROLS WIDE
BERTH, ZAVORIN RESTATED NIKITIN'S COMPLAINTS RE DIFFICULTY
OF ARRANGING EXCURSIONS,HIGH COSTS IN THE U.S., AND
EXCESSIVE WAITS FOR VISAS. HE FELT, HOWEVER, THAT
ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIAL OFFICE TO COORDINATE TRAVEL FROM
USSR TO THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE USEFUL. THIS OFFICE,
LOCATED IN MOSCOW, COULD PERHAPS BE AFFILIATED WITH THE
USSR TRADE AND ECONOMIC COUNCIL. (ZAVORIN'S COMPLAINT
AND SUGGESTION ARE SYMPTOMATIC OF SOVIET LAMENT THAT
US SYSTEM IS NOT LIKE SOVIET SYSTEM -- WE DO NOT
HAVE ONE MASSIVE ORGANIZATION, AND ONLY ONE, TO DEAL
WITH EACH ASPECT OF SOCIETY AND ECONOMY.) ZAVORIN
ALSO FELT IT COULD BE HELPFUL IF MORE US COMPANIES
IN THE TOURIST FIELD WERE ENCOURAGED TO ESTABLISH A
SPECIAL EAST-EUROPEAN-SOVIET DEPARTMENT.

4. ZAVORIN MENTIONED AN UPCOMING VISIT TO MOSCOW BY C. LANGHORNE
WASHBURN,ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR TOURISM, AND
REPRESENTATIVES OF VARIOUS US COMPANIES. ZAVORIN
HOPED VISIT WOULD PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR SERIOUS
DISCUSSION OF HIS SUGGESTIONS AND OF THE PROBLEMS WHICH
HE CITED.

5. ZAVORIN SEVERAL TIMES EXPRESSED AWARENESS OF ACUTE
NEED TO CONSTRUCT HIGH QUALITY HOTELS AND OTHER TOURIST
FACLILTIES WITHIN THE SOVIET UNION. HE CITED CONTRACT
SIGNED WITH INTERCONTINENTAL HOTELS ON MAY 31 THIS
YEAR TO BUILD HOTELS IN LENINGRAD, KIEV AND MOSCOW AS
EXAMPLE SOVIET MOVEMENT THIS DIRECTION. MENTIONING
THAT "WE HAVE SO LITTLE TIME", ZAVORIN SEEMED CONFIDENT
OF MOSCOW BEING CHOSEN AS SITE FOR 1980 OLYMPICS AND
RECOGNIZED NEED TO GO FORWARD RAPIDLY WITH TOURIST
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PREPARATIONS.

6. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION DEPARTMENT
CAN PROVIDE RE VISIT MENTIONED PARA 4.
STOESSEL

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